

Governor Carney Signs Executive Order to Improve Reentry Procedures, Reduce Recidivism

Executive Order creates commission focused on reentry reform, and new office at DOC to oversee implementation

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney on Tuesday signed [Executive Order #27](#), which focuses on improving reentry procedures for incarcerated individuals in Delaware. The Executive Order creates a commission focused on reentry reform, policies, and procedures, with a goal of helping former inmates more successfully reenter their communities. The Order will more effectively coordinate service delivery, strengthen data sharing among agencies, create a comprehensive reentry protocol, improve the availability of academic and vocational programming prior to an inmate's release, and strive to reduce recidivism in Delaware.

"It's our responsibility to look out for every Delawarean. We need to make sure offenders who serve out their sentences are able to reenter society ready to positively contribute to their communities, and have the support they need to succeed," said **Governor Carney**. "This Executive Order will improve our existing reentry procedures, and in turn, reduce recidivism. That will help strengthen communities across our state."

Executive Order #27 is the result of [Delaware's participation](#) in the National Criminal Justice Reform Project, an initiative led by the National Governors Association and the National Criminal Justice Association Center for Justice Planning to

assist states in implementing evidence-based criminal justice reforms.

“This Executive Order enhances the ability for the Department of Correction to meet its goals of ensuring public safety and providing opportunities for rehabilitation to justice-involved individuals preparing to return to the community,” said **Perry Phelps, Commissioner of the Delaware Department of Correction**. “I look forward to working with Governor Carney and our sister agencies to reduce barriers and collateral consequences for the men and women exiting the correctional system.”

Approximately 23,000 incarcerated adults are released from the State of Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) facilities annually. Seventy-six percent of those who are released from DOC facilities are rearrested within three years. Sixty-eight percent of those released had a reconviction and sixty-five percent had a recommitment. Delaware’s percentage of probationers is approximately forty-six percent higher than the national average, and its percentage of incarcerated adults is approximately twelve percent higher than the national average. Reentry reforms in Executive Order #27 are intended to directly confront Delaware’s high rate of recidivism.

“The Delaware Criminal Justice Council is excited to work with Governor Carney and the newly-established commission to build on the continuing work of improving reentry services to all justice involved individuals,” said **Christian Kervick, Executive Director of the Delaware Criminal Justice Council**. “This Executive Order includes best practices and reforms to improve our Criminal Justice System and increase public safety throughout the State.”

The Delaware Correctional Reentry Commission will consist of members of the Governor’s Cabinet, the Chief Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, the Attorney General and others who work closely on this issue, including the Executive Director

of the Criminal Justice Council. This Commission will oversee implementation and further develop the State's comprehensive strategic reentry initiatives, ensuring that federal, state, and local resources are used most efficiently to reduce duplicative reentry services and align with the application of evidence-based approaches.

"Ninety-eight percent of the people who enter Delaware prisons will return to the community. They are our neighbors. We live, shop, and work in the same community," said **Adam Balick, Chair of the newly-created Delaware Correctional Reentry Commission**. "It is in all of our interests to give them the tools they need to succeed when they return to our community. We know the factors that lead to recidivism. Homelessness, unemployment, drug addiction, among other things. We can lower recidivism rates in Delaware by helping these men and women reintegrate successfully."

This Executive Order also restructures the DOC Office of Research and Planning to the Office of Planning, Research and Reentry. This office will oversee the implementation and maintenance of the Commission's initiatives from prison to community corrections centers to probation and parole to the community.

"The National Criminal Justice Association is extremely pleased to have worked with Governor Carney and his leadership team to advance prisoner reentry reform efforts in the State of Delaware," said **Chris Asplen, Executive Director of the National Criminal Justice Association**. "This Executive Order represents over a year and a half of work by many committed, hard-working leaders from a myriad of disciplines and agencies who make up the steering committee and many working groups and community groups who are dedicated to increasing public safety by improving the state's prisoner reentry process. This E0 includes the many priorities identified in Delaware's Prisoner Reentry Strategic Plan. We are grateful to our partners at the National Governor's Association, our consultants and to the

John and Laura Arnold Foundation for the support that made this work possible.”

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